

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 09323 041056Z

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ACTION SS-25

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O 041008Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5717

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 9323

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

CISCO TWO: EMBASSY COMMENTS ON AHMED NASSER STATEMENT

REF: (A) ASK 3837; (B) ASMARA 659

EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON REFTEL (A).

1. AHMED NASSER MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CANDID ABOUT THE MOTIVATION OF THE ABDUCTION. IT MAY PROVE TO BE AS HE STATES IT-- A CALCULATED POLITICAL ACT. IT MAY CONCEIVABLY, HOWEVER, SIMPLY BE AN EX-POST-FACTO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE UNAUTHORIZED DEED OF A SMALL LOOSELY CONTROLLED (UNCONTROLLED?) INSURGENT UNIT. WE SHALL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

2. IF IT DOES TURN OUT TO BE A CALCULATED DIRECTED ABDUCTION, HOWEVER, WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY FACE A NEW SITUATION-ONE IN WHICH THE ELF HAS MOVED FROM DEFACTO NEUTRALITY TOWARDS THE US PRESENCE IN ERITREA, TOWARDS ACTS OF HOSTILITY, HOWEVER LIMITED AND CIRCUMSCRIBED.

3. ASSUMING AS WE MUST UNTIL SHOWN OTHERWISE THAT THIS MAY INDEED PROVE TO BE THE CASE, WE MUST TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT OURSELVES AGAINST THESE POSSIBLE NEW THREATS. FOR EXAMPLE: WE WILL WISH TO BALANCE THE RISKS OF ATTACKS-BY-FIRE WHICH INHERE IN THE PROTECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF ETHIOPIAN TROOPS NEAR OUR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 09323 041056Z

FACILITIES AGAINST THE PROTECTION THEY AFFORD AGAINST THE THREAT

OF FURTHER ABDUCTIONS (CF REF B). CONGEN ASMARA WILL HAVE TO JUDGE THE PROTECTIVE REQUIREMENTS OF THE OPTIMAL TRADE-OFF AND TASK THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO MEET THEM. DCM EXPECTS TO BE IN ASMARA NEXT WEEK AND WILL REVIEW SECURITY REQUIREMENTS WITH CONGEN THEN.

4. ALTHOUGH WE MAY BE DRAWING FALSE PARALLELS WITH THE TENNECO ABDUCTION, THE TENOR OF PARA 1 REF A STRIKES US AS PLAUSIBLE. COMMUNICATIONS LIKELY ARE DIFFICULT WITH A SMALL BAND ON THE MOVE. ITS LOCATION LIKELY IS HARD TO ASCERTAIN FOR THE REASONS STATED. THERE PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO BE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ONCE THE CAPTORS HAVE THEIR DUCKS IN A ROW. HOWEVER, ASSUMING FOR THE MOMENT THAT WE ARE FACED WITH A CALCULATED POLITICAL ACT--REQUIRING AS IT WOULD ELF HEADQUARTERS DIRECTION--IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO INFER THAT THE CAPTIVES WILL BE MOVED CLOSER TO THE SEAT OF ELF AUTHORITY. IF SO, THE TENNECO EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS THAT COMMUNICATIONS WITH CAPTORS AND SAPTIVES WILL LIKELY IMPROVE LATER, AS CAPTIVES AND CAPTORS PRESUMABLY (BUT NOT NECESSARILY) MOVE TOWARD ELF HEADQUARTERS.

5. PURSING THIS ASSUMPTION A BIT FURTHER, WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY REF. A IN THE HOPE THAT THE CAPTIVES LIKELY ARE BEING ADEQUATELY CARED FOR AND THAT THE SUSPICION OF THEIR COMPLICITY IN THEIR OWN ABDUCTION MAY YET PROVE TO BE UNFOUNDED.
HUMMEL

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NNN

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